The Seven Old Ladies of Lavender Town

An Operetta in two acts

H. C. Bunner

782.8 Weil
Seven dd ladies of Lavender Town

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THE SEVEN OLD LADIES OF LAVENDER TOWN

AN OPERETTA IN TWO ACTS

By HENRY C. BUNNER
MUSIC BY OSCAR WEIL

ILLUSTRATED

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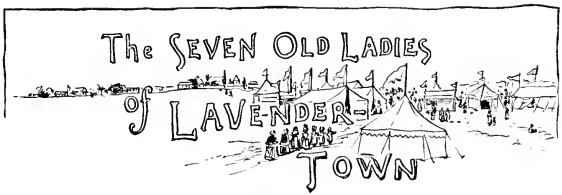


An Operetta in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

LIGHTNING HASKINS, *the Showman.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON.....
JULIUS CÆSAR.....
ALEXANDER THE GREAT.....
JOHN SMITH.....
CHARLES C CONFUCIUS.....
HENRY THE EIGHTH.....
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. .....

The Great Mechanical and Conversational Agglomeration of Waxworks.

THE FAIRY AUNTY MACASSA.
THE DUCHESS OF TIDYTOWN.

MRS. SMITH.....
MRS. BROWN.....
MRS. JONES.....
MRS. ROBINSON.....
MRS. SIMPKINS.....
MRS. TIMPKINS.....

The Seven Little Old Ladies of Lavender Town.

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI.. .....

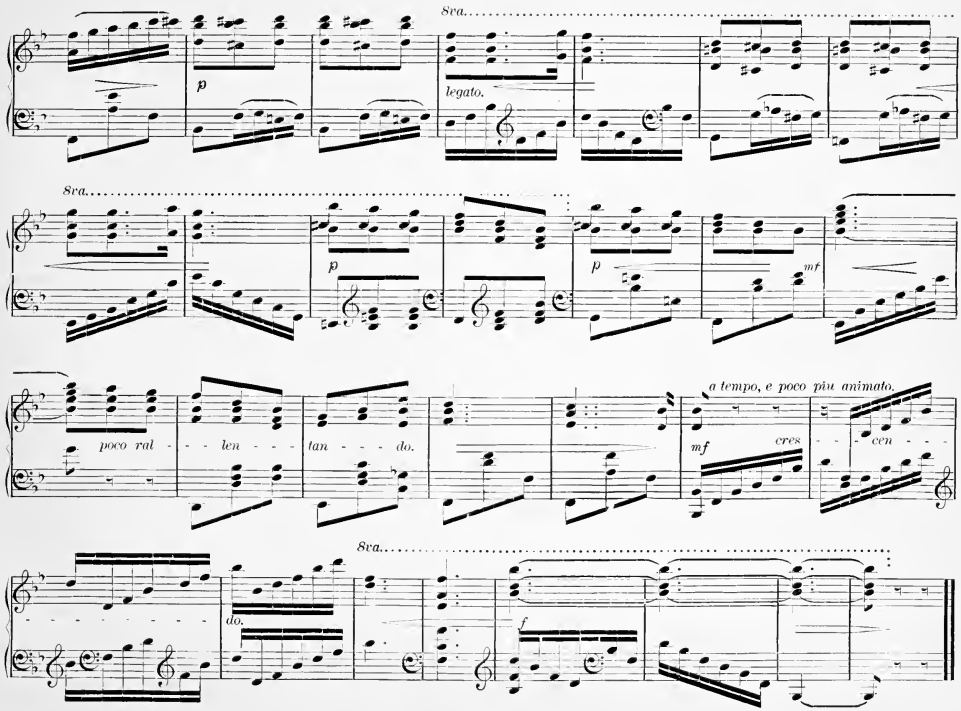
A PAGE.

The Scene is laid in Kategreenawayland.
The Time is Once Upon a Time.

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES OF LAVENDER TOWN

INTRODUCTION

Andante ben legato.
mp
crescendo.
poco a poco.
poco più lento. pp
p
poco rall.
p
p rit.
Allegro moderato.
p grazioso, e poco legiero.


8va.
p
legato.
8va.
p
p
mf
poco ral - - - len - - - tan - - - do.
a tempo, e poco più animato.
mf
cres - - - cen - - -
8va.
do.
f

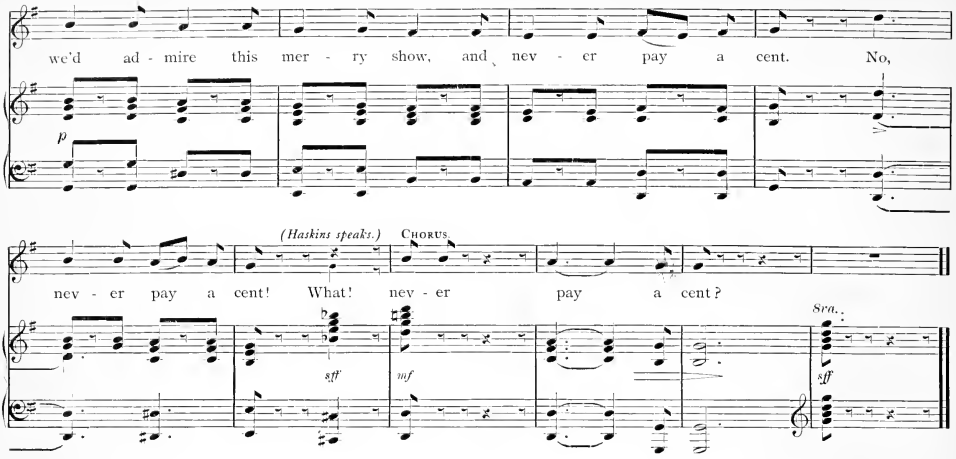
The first act takes place in the afternoon, and the stage represents the interior of a booth in Tidytown Fair. It is a plain room, with a bench near the door on each side, and at the back a low platform, over which a curtain hangs. On the curtain are letters:

PROFESSOR LIGHTNING HASKINS'S
GREAT MECHANICAL AND CONVERSATIONAL AGGLOMERATION OF
WAXWORKS.

When the play begins this curtain hides the platform. Professor Lightning Haskins *is standing at the door to the right.*

CHORUS OF FAIR-GOERS (*outside*).

Chorus (off the stage).
We are the folks of Ti - dy - town, and clev - er folk are
poco rall.
p
we; un - to the fair we gay - ly go, the won - drous things to see. And
p
p
if our eyes were mi - cro - scopes we'd look with - in each tent, and
p



Haskins (*gloomily*). That's the truth. The people hereabouts won't pay for anything. They get all the sights free if they can; if they can't, they just stand around the door and look at the signs. I've been travelling with these waxworks of mine for seven years today, and I never found such a mean fair as this one. People hereabouts don't seem to appreciate true art. [*He looks out the door.*] There they go, flocking into the show of that fellow with the common old-fashioned waxworks. Now my waxworks are an extra fine, fairy-made article, and they move their arms and legs and make speeches, and nobody comes to see them. Oh, it's discouraging to an artist! There! There goes a grand lady with a long train. I'll wager she goes over the way. No. Good gracious! she's coming straight here. [*Enter, very grand and stately, and muffled in a great cloak, the* Duchess of Tidytown. Haskins *bows very low.*] Good-afternoon, madam.

DUCHESS (*sternly*). Your Grace!

HASKINS. My—what? I beg your pardon, madam.

DUCHESS. Your Grace!

HASKINS (*flattered*). Oh no, madam. That's not my title. Just Professor Lightning Haskins — simply Professor—

DUCHESS (*severely*). *Will* you call me your Grace?

HASKINS (*meekly*). Oh yes, certainly, madam — your Grace, I mean.

DUCHESS. Do you know who I am?

HASKINS. No, your Grace.

DUCHESS. I am the Duchess of Tidytown.

HASKINS. Delighted to meet your Grace. Allow me to introduce myself—Professor Lightning—

DUCHESS (*paying no attention to him*). I have come here to satisfy myself as to the character of your exhibition.

HASKINS (*going towards the curtain*). Certainly, your Grace. Let me show you the Grand Agglomeration—

DUCHESS. No. I don't want to see it; I only wish to hear about it.

HASKINS. Same price, your Grace. This show is so expensive that I can't afford to talk about it for nothing.

DUCHESS. Here is a guinea—a golden guinea. Give me as little conversation as you can for the money.

HASKINS. As little?

DUCHESS. Just as little as you can, or a trifle less. You have only to answer my questions. I wish to know if your exhibition is a proper one for proper young ladies.

HASKINS. My show is the properest show in all the fair, your Grace. The character of my waxworks is unexcelled, and they utter only the noblest sentiments, out of the copy-books.

DUCHESS. If I am satisfied with your performance, I will send my daughters here this evening. But there must be nothing in the entertainment to offend the daughters of a Duchess.

HASKINS. Madam, your Grace, I mean—my waxworks would not offend anybody. Just look at them. [*He draws the curtain aside.*] Here they are—George Washington, Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great, John Smith — all excellent men.

THE DUCHESS

DUCHESS. Very respectable, I believe. They have been dead some time, have they not?

HASKINS. I guarantee them to be all dead. Here is Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Henry the Eighth.

DUCHESS. Henry the Eighth! But he was a man who had six wives!

HASKINS. Oh, but he hasn't now. He is quite reformed

since he joined my show. He is now a confirmed old bachelor. [*He closes the curtain.*

DUCHESS. And you are sure that your exhibition is fit for a Duchess's daughters?

HASKINS. Your Grace, it's fit for two Duchesses' daughters. [*Confidentially.*] I don't mind telling you, your Grace, that I got the whole outfit from a fairy, who sold them out cheap. They are all very respectable people, whom she changed into waxworks because they offended her. They are not at all common waxworks, and they are to be seen every afternoon and evening for the low price of one shilling—three shillings to Duchesses' daughters.

DUCHESS. Very well. I shall expect you to give a private performance, for the entertainment of my daughters, at precisely seven o'clock this evening. The vulgar public must be excluded.

HASKINS. From what I have seen of this town, your Grace, that will be easy. Going already? Just look once more at the waxworks [*drawing the curtain aside*]. They are as natural as life.

DUCHESS. No, I cannot. If I should look at them any longer, I should want to pinch them, and that would be beneath the dignity of a Duchess.

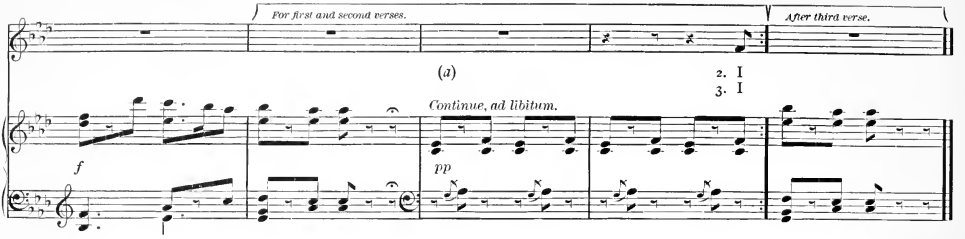
[*She goes out proudly.*

HASKINS. Well, this is something like business at last. Three shillings apiece! I hope she's got a large family. Aha! I feel like the great original Haskins once more.

Song. (*a*)

(*a*) For text of second and third verses, see p. 78.

dawn - ing, O; I hang my sign - board up in sight, and low - er down my
p
awn - ing, O. For I'm Light - ning Has - kins, O, for I'm Light - ning
legato.
p
Has - kins, O. I do not know a bet - ter show than that of Lightning Has - kins, O.



2. I putty up the horrid holes
Where people pinch their calveses, O;
I sell admission cards in shoals,
The wholeses and the halveses, O.
For *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O, for *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O.
I do not know a better show than that of Lightning Haskins, O.

3. I rise and speak a little speech
When people come to see them, O;
But though their bloom is like the peach,
I wouldn't like to be them, O.
For *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O, for *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O.
I do not ax to turn to wax, for I am Lightning Haskins, O.

Yes, I am Lightning Haskins, but it does not look as though people generally knew it. [*Looking out.*] Ah! my luck has changed. Here comes an audience—all in a row.

[*Enter* Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Simpkins, Mrs. Timpkins, *and* Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci.

Haskins. Very glad to see you, ladies. Lightning Haskins — Professor Lightning Haskins, at your service.

Mrs. Smith. You are very polite, sir. Allow us to introduce ourselves.

(*a*) A quiet dance step of four or eight measures.

Chorus.—The Seven Old Ladies.

anx - ious to see . . . . . what it is we can see. We're so po - lite and we dress so
hus-band - less now, ... and we're homeless, you see. We're so po - lite and we dress so
p
pret - ti - ly, we dis-course un - to all so ver - y wit - ti - ly, that we
pret - ti - ly, we dis-course un - to all so ver - y wit - ti - ly, that we
nev - er re - ceive the least mite of a frown. We're . . . . . the seven old la - dies of Lav - en - der -
nev - er re - ceive the least mite of a frown. We're . . . . . the seven old la - dies of Lav - en - der -
p

Mrs. Smith. If you'd like to hear anything more about us, sir, we shall be happy to tell you anything you wish to know. Our history is very interesting.

Haskins (*pompously*). Not at all—not at all. It's not necessary. I have no doubt that you are properly respectable persons whom I may with propriety admit to my show. The exhibition will now begin. [*He draws aside the curtain.*] Behold, ladies, the— Hold on a moment [*letting curtain close.*] One shilling apiece, if you please.

Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Brown has all the shillings, I believe.

Mrs. Brown. Excuse me; I gave them to Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci.

Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci. Mrs. Smith took them away from me when we came to the shop where they sold dolls. I'm so giddy, you know.

Mrs. Smith (*producing money*). Here they are. But I have only six shillings. Would you mind taking two sixpences for Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci, sir?

Haskins (*taking money*). Not at all. [*He draws curtain aside.*] You now behold, ladies, the Great Mechanical and Conversational Agglomeration of Waxworks. These, ladies and gentlemen—ladies; I beg your pardon—are the only waxworks in the world that really work. You will now hear them recite their pieces and move their arms and legs, all for one shilling apiece.

Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci. And two sixpences. Oh, I forgot! I oughtn't to talk.

[*The curtain being drawn aside, displays the* Waxworks *seated in chairs. As* Haskins *calls upon each one, he rises, speaks his piece with appropriate gestures, and sits down.* Haskins *walks along the platform, pointing out the characters.*

Haskins. Here, ladies and gentlemen, you see the

great Julius Cæsar. This famous Roman general and world-famed ruler lived several centuries ago, and is now dead. His most notable action during his life was the burning of his ships—an act of wasteful extravagance, for which he was severely censured by the Roman Senate. He also crossed the Rubicon, an unparalleled feat in those days. Julius Cæsar will now move his arms and legs, and speak his piece. Abracadabra!

ONE OF THE OLD LADIES

JULIUS CÆSAR. All Gaul is divided into three parts—

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together*). Oh, he needn't go on.

HASKINS. Philopena, Julius! [Julius Cæsar *is instantly motionless.*] We will proceed to the next. This, ladies and gentlemen, is George Washington, the Father of his Country, first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. [*The* Waxworks *execute the appropriate salute.*] Now, George, Abracadabra! You see, I have only to say Abracadabra to start them, and Philopena to stop them. Abracadabra, George!

GEORGE WASHINGTON. When I arrived at the age of seven years my father presented me with a bright new hatchet, and I at once amused myself with cutting down a valuable cherry-tree to which the old man was greatly attached. When my father arrived and beheld the ruin I had wrought he inquired, in tones of deep feeling, "Who has cut down my cherry-tree?" I immediately replied, "Father, I cannot—"

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together*). Oh, please make him stop! He looks *so* much better with his mouth shut!

HASKINS. Philopena, George! The next one, ladies and gentlemen, is Alexander the Great. Owing to his unfamiliarity with the English language, Alexander is unable to express himself as he would wish to. He will therefore appear only in his celebrated act of weeping for more worlds to conquer. Abracadabra, Alexander! [Alexander *weeps.*] Philopena! We now pass on, ladies and gentlemen, to the world-renowned John Smith, founder of the immortal Smith family. Here you gaze upon the only and original John Smith. All other John Smiths exhibited in any other concern are base and spurious imitations.

ONE OF THE DUCHESS'S GIRLS

MRS. SMITH (*repressing a sob*). Pardon me, sir, but please do not make him talk. You cannot understand, but it awakens painful memories to me.

Mrs. Jones. We prefer our waxworks silent.

Haskins. Certainly, ladies. Here we have the great Confucius—Charles C. Confucius, of China, the gentleman who invented the Chinese alphabet, which contains seventy-one thousand four hundred and sixty-nine letters and three postal cards. This is Henry the Eighth of England. He was a King when he was alive, and he is dusted off twice as often as any other waxwork in the show. And here, ladies and gentlemen, the exhibition closes with the great Napoleon Bonaparte, the original inventor of white duck trousers. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have seen the wonders that it is my privilege to exhibit to you, and you may go home and marvel at the gigantic progress of science and art without extra charge.

[*During the lecture the* Seven Old Ladies *have followed* Haskins, *expressing surprise and pleasure at the sight of each* Waxwork. *At the close of the discourse they appear much affected. At close of lecture* Haskins *draws the curtain.*

Chorus.—The Seven Old Ladies.

light-ed to know. In your whole ex-hi-bi-tion there's nothing that lacks; we're pleased with your ways, and we're
beau-ti-ful show; they re-call the sad time when in an-ger and pride the laws of po-lite-ness we
pleased with your wax. But if you don't mind, we will drop just here a sor-row-ful tear, a
bold-ly de-fied. We were rude to our husbands one ter-ri-ble day, and the Fair-y Ma-cas-sa, she
p
p

sim - ple tear. The cause of that tear you may not know; 'tis no of - fence to your
took them a - way; and so that is the rea - son, as you may know, that we weep at the sight of your
poco piu lento.
poco ritardando.
splendid show— Oh, ... oh, ... the beau - ti - ful show!
1.
2.
2. They re -
love - ly show— Oh, ... oh, ... the beau - ti - ful . . . . . show!
mf piu lento.

MRS. SMITH (*brokenly*). Thank you, sir. It—is—very—interesting.

MRS. JONES (*almost weeping*). We have been very much interested.

MRS. BROWN (*mournfully*). I feel as if I were going to cry.

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI (*weeping*). I don't believe I could giggle if I tried.

HASKINS. You seem to take waxworks pretty hard.

MRS. SMITH. You cannot understand, sir. By your leave, I will tell you our sad story. Although we seem so old, we are young and beautiful. Seven years ago we were seven lovely brides, and we lived in Lavender Town, near Rosemary Lane. Alas, we quarrelled with our good husbands, and they quarrelled with us, although we were most desirable wives. To punish us for our bad tempers, the Fairy Aunty Macassa—we had no fairy godmother, but only a fairy aunty—turned us into seven old ladies, and condemned us to roam the world in search of our husbands, whom she turned into something else—we really don't know what.

HASKINS (*aside*). Good gracious! the Fairy Aunty Macassa! Why, that's *my* fairy! And these must be the wives of my waxworks. What will become of my business if they find it out?

MRS. JONES. And all these years we have been wandering about, hoping to find our husbands somewhere. And we have been very much affected by a peculiar coincidence. Your beautiful waxworks have the same first names as our husbands, who were called—

MRS. SMITH (*sobbing*). John!

MRS. JONES (*sobbing*). George!

MRS. BROWN (*sobbing*). Julius!

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI (*sobbing*). Alexander!

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together, sobbing*). And Henry, and Charles, and Napoleon!

HASKINS (*aside*). I must get them out of here at once,

THE SEVEN YOUNG LADIES

or they will take their husbands away with them. [*Aloud.*] Ladies, you must excuse me, but this show closes promptly at five, and it's two seconds past five now.

MRS. SMITH. Oh, dear me, sir, we're sorry. We won't detain you. But perhaps you will allow us—

HASKINS. I'll allow you anything—only this show closes promptly—

MRS. SMITH. If you'll only allow us to sing one little song before we go!

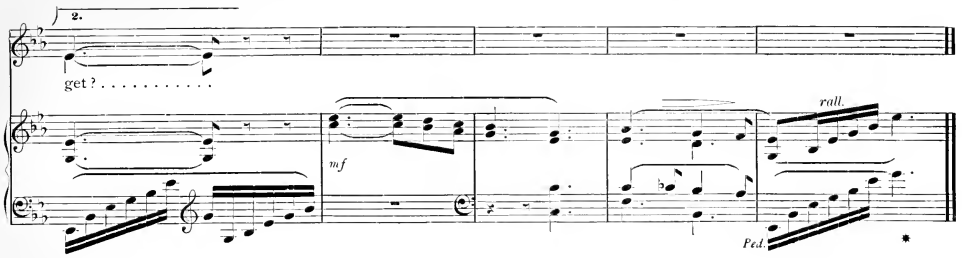
HASKINS (*desperately*). Well, sing it, and go. Never mind the key.

MRS. SMITH. It is a song which the fairy told us to sing, and if our husbands hear it they will recognize us.

HASKINS (*aside*). Oh! oh! oh! I'm done for!

Chorus.

(a) At the close of the act the curtain begins to descend at this point.



HASKINS (*drawing curtain aside*). What is this?

[*Tableau.* The Seven Old Ladies *and the* Waxworks *recognize each other.* Haskins *is desperate.*

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES. Give us our husbands.

HASKINS. Never! They're mine. I bought them from the fairy. This show closes promptly at five. I don't want to be impolite, but—get out!

MRS. SMITH. We'll have them yet.

[Haskins *tears his hair, and urges* The Seven Old Ladies *out. They depart, stretching out their arms to the* Waxworks, *who stretch out their arms, but cannot leave their places. All sing "Lavender Village."* Haskins *tears his hair again.*

Curtain.

ACT II.

The scene is the same, at night. The curtain of the platform is drawn away, and the Waxworks *are seen covered up with sheets or furniture covers. And while they are covered up they sing.*

Chorus.—Waxworks.

al - ways, al - ways on the go, we do *not*, do *not* pre - cise - ly care: for life in a wax - work
p
show, for home in a coun - try fair, where you're al - ways, al - ways on the go, we do
not pre-cise - ly care. For our hair is drop - ping out, we're a half - inch thick with
p

dust, and folks who are full of lin-ger-ing doubt, they pinch thro' the ten - der crust. For
rallentando.
p
life in a wax-work show, for home in a coun-try fair, where you're al-ways, al - ways on the go, we do
a tempo.
not, do not pre - cise - ly care; for life in a wax-work show, for home in a coun-try fair, where you're

[Haskins *enters, and proceeds to take off their covers and dust them off with a feather duster.*]

HASKINS. Here's a nice piece of business! If I hadn't that engagement to entertain the Duchess's daughters to-night, I'd pack up and get out of the town before those women could come back. I've said Abracadabra to these miserable waxworks until I can't say it any more; and the spell doesn't seem to work as it used to. The fairy didn't tell me that these waxworks had wives, or I wouldn't have bought them. Well, it's time for the Duchess's daughters. And here they are, right on time.

PROFESSOR HASKINS DUSTING OFF

[*Enter the* Duchess's Daughters, *cloaked and hooded.*

Chorus.

Allegro grazioso.
legato.
mf
p
1. Oh,
p
we are the Duch-ess - 's, the Duch - ess - 's girls, and prop - er young peo - ple are we; . . . . . our
se - ums are hor - ri - bly, oh, hor - ri - bly low, and so are me - nag - e - ries too; . . . . . but
8va. . . . . .
p leggiero.

1st Solo.
hair is in tight lit - tle, tight lit - tle curls, and we al-ways take five - o'-clock tea. We
you have an ex - cel-lent, ex - cel-lent show, and a man of re - fine-ment are you. So
8va.
p
p
2d Solo.
3d Solo.
like ver - y much to see shows, if they are in-struc-tive to youth, and
show us no hor - ri - ble shapes, no mon - keys in co - coa - nut trees, no
8va.
leggiero.
p
p
Chorus.
yours is the kind, we are led to sup - pose, where the show - man strict - ly tells the truth. And
li - ons or ti - gers, hy - e - nas or apes, and no hip - po - po - po - ta - mus, please. No
f

1.
yours is the kind, we are led to sup - pose, where the show - man strict - ly tells the truth.
li - ons or ti - gers, hy - e - nas or apes, and no hip - po - po - po - - - - - - -
poco rit.
p
2.
2. Mu -
- - - - - - -

"HOLD ON, THAT ISN'T YOUR PIECE"

HASKINS. Never mind if it isn't. You say so.

JULIUS CÆSAR. I won't.

HASKINS. What does this mean?

JULIUS CÆSAR. We've struck.

GEORGE WASHINGTON. We have formed the Waxworks Union.

"WHAT 'LL YOU TAKE FOR THEM?"

ALEXANDER. And we won't waxwork.

JULIUS CÆSAR. Unless we can have our wives again.

[*The ladies applaud.*

THE DUCHESS (*entering, followed by a* Page *with a bandbox*). What is this I hear? Unseemly language from waxworks? Is this the exhibition to which I have sent my daughters?

HASKINS (*desperately*). I beseech your Grace's pardon. My waxworks have struck, and I can't do anything with them. [*To the* Waxworks.] Philopena, the whole lot of you.

THE WAXWORKS. Philopena yourself.

DUCHESS. Let us submit this matter to arbitration. What do these gentlemen want?

THE WAXWORKS. We want our wives?

DUCHESS. Quite right and proper. Give them their wives.

HASKINS. I haven't got their wives. I can't give them any wives.

DUCHESS. Then I will.

HASKINS. *You* will?

DUCHESS. Yes. Here they are.

[*The* Duchess's Daughters *rise and throw off their wraps, appearing as* The Seven Old Ladies, *only made young again. They form a line and sing.*

Chorus.—THE SEVEN OLD LADIES.

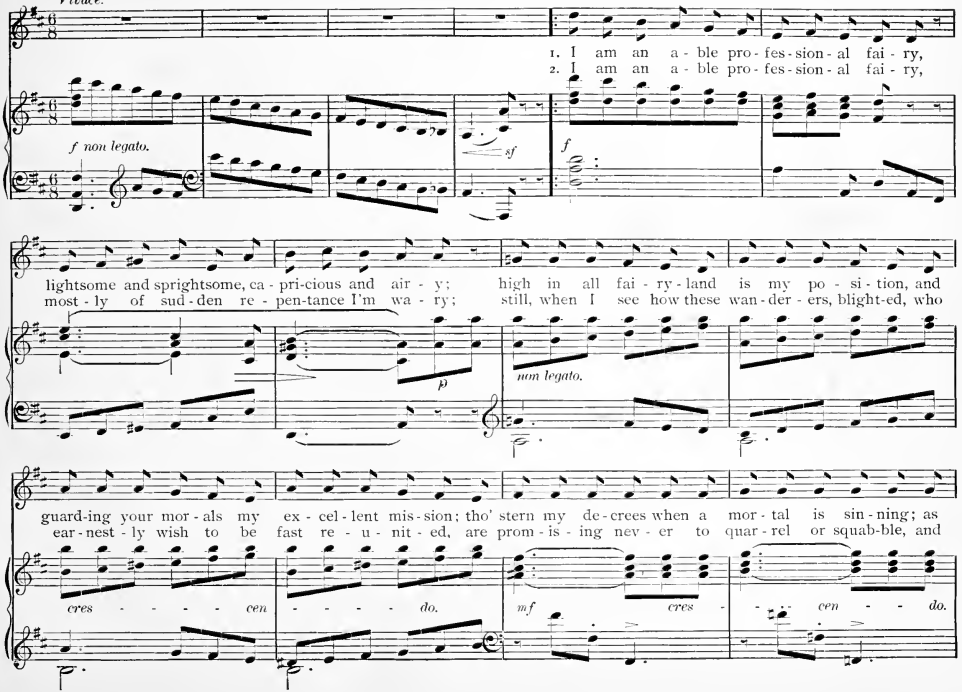
The chorus is a repetition of the first verse of No. 4 of the first act, with the word "young" substituted for "old."

[*And they all courtesy.*

HASKINS. But—look here; you can't do that. Nobody can do that sort of thing but the Fairy Aunty Macassa.

DUCHESS. And I am the Fairy Aunty Macassa.

Song.—THE DUCHESS.



Do you not recognize me?

[*She throws off her cloak, and appears in a brilliant costume.*

Haskins. I don't know whether I do or not. Where are your wings?

Duchess (*beckoning to the* Page). Here in this band-box. You don't want to make me go to the trouble of putting them on, do you?

Haskins. Oh, no, your Grace. But you won't mind my looking at them, will you? [*He takes the wings out.*] What 'll you take for them?

Duchess. They are not for sale. I use them in my

business. [Haskins *puts them back.*] I have come here to announce that as the seven young married couples of Lavender Town are sincerely penitent for their past naughtiness, I have decided to pardon them, and release them from their spell. By my marvellous power I have changed these Seven Old Ladies back to Seven Young Brides, and by my marvellous power I will now free these seven Waxworks.

[*She takes* Haskins's *stick and waves it. The* Waxworks *descend from the platform, and each one embraces his wife.*

Mrs. Smith. John!

John Smith. Jemima!

Mrs. Jones. George!

George Washington. Gloriana!

Mrs. Brown. Julius!

Julius Cæsar. Josephine!

Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci. Alexander!

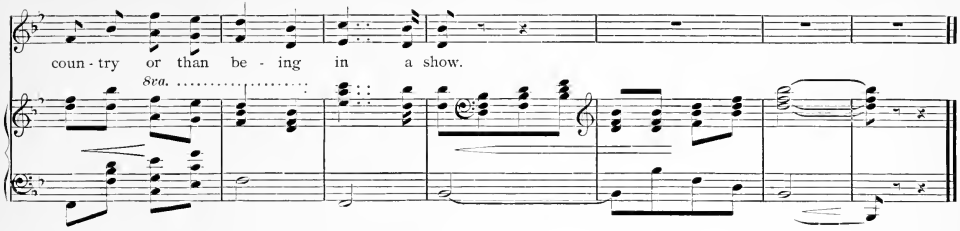
Alexader the Great. Anne!

Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Simpkins, and Mrs. Timpkins. Our husbands!

Napoleon, Confucius, and Henry the Eighth. Our wives!

Chorus.—The Seven Old Ladies and the Waxworks.

we're our-selves a - gain, and now we will live to - geth - er un - til — we don't know
when. It's ver - y much more pleas - ant to live to - geth - er so, than
p
pp
pp
trapes - ing round the coun - try or than be - ing in a show, than trapes - ing round the
mf
mf



HASKINS. And I—what will become of me?

DUCHESS. Don't worry. I'll make you a waxwork yourself, and sell you to somebody else.

JULIUS CÆSAR. And now, dear Fairy, pray excuse us if we seem to ask too much, but—

MRS. SMITH. Our husbands are still waxworks.

GEORGE WASHINGTON. If you could conveniently change us back.

DUCHESS. Oh, certainly. I will change you back to your natural shapes.

HASKINS (*maliciously*). Perhaps you'll do that—by your "marvellous power."

DUCHESS. I will.

HASKINS (*defiantly*). Well, do it, then.

DUCHESS. I will—as soon as the curtain falls.

Finale.

Well we re-mem-ber the bright, hap-py hours bliss-ful-ly spent in its rose-ma-ry bowers!
Waxworks.
Old Ladies.
Leav-ing the show with-out sigh or re-gret. Nev-er a-gain will we get in a pet.
p
Omnes.
Lav-en-der Vil-lage, Lav-en-der Vil-lage, Lav - - - - en-der Vil-lage, we ne'er will for-
mf
p
Ped.

Curtain.

APR 8 1938